



INFOCUS

IN-DEPTH NEWS, FACTUAL AND RIGHT ON TARGET
THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF ISABELA

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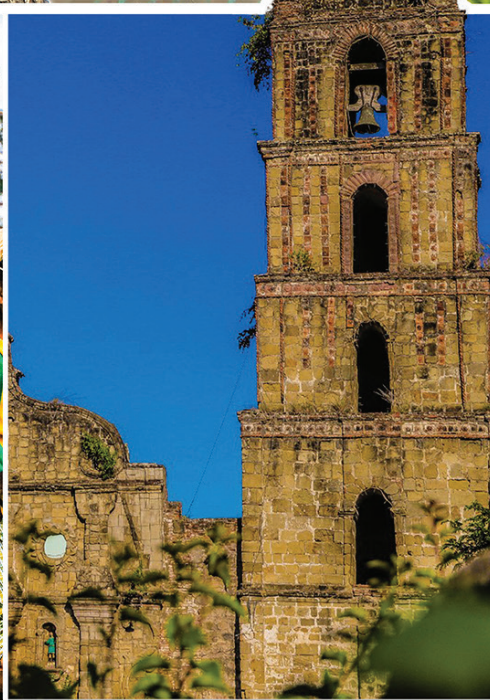
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IN-DEPTH NEWS, FACTUAL AND RIGHT ON TARGET

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and harnessing the power of information
in pursuit of a stronger citizenry and
more enduring institutions."*

2022 ISSUE

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Fresh Mandate in the New Normal

As people are adjusting to continue with their lives under the new normal, one can just wonder what are the priorities of our national and local leaders in government to kick-off, start anew or reboot from the ills of COVID-19.

In his inaugural address for his second term as governor on June 29, 2022, Gov. Rodito Albano III stressed that in the height of COVID-19 pandemic in the province, no Isabeleño has been left behind while reaffirming his oath and rededicating another three years of service to support the causes that the people care about.

As we are starting to see a way to restore health, economies and societies, Gov. Rodito also sees the need to improvise, adapt and overcome. This time stronger and firmer in his commitment to attain good health and sustained income, and provide food on the table of every Isabeleño.

The provincial government will continue to fortify its defenses against economic shocks, capacitate the people through improved basic services, and putting in place new programs, projects and activities that will fuel the revival of our economy at the local level.

The focal point of Isabela's economic roadmap will be on agricultural development with all roads leading to agriculture as the province firms up its status as the Food Basket of the North by securing food sufficiency through support services, integrated assistance to rice and corn farmers, fisher folks, livestock raisers and agricultural cooperatives.

On his second term, Gov. Rodito vowed to continue upgrading hospital services, facilities, and the overall capability of the provincial government to deliver efficient and preventive treatment and rehabilitative healthcare for diseases and emerging health emergencies, as well as opening a Dialysis Center in five district hospitals.

Consistent with the policy to prioritize and accelerate the provision of quality healthcare to our beloved constituents, Gov. Rodito and Vice Gov. Dy are working to upgrade the existing professional healthcare services and facilities of the Gov. Faustino N. Dy Sr. Memorial Hospital to prepare for the increase of its bed capacity from the present 100-bed to 500-bed capacity by virtue of R.A. 11882.

To address escalating prices of fertilizers and other farm inputs Gov. Rodito is poised to strengthen fertilizer subsidies to farmers. With the available technology for local manufacture of biological fertilizers, pesticides and control agents, a production center for low-priced and safe farm inputs will be established to increase yield and the earnings of farmers, and lessen production cost.

Investment in our school children will be strengthened by ensuring that they are properly nourished. The BRO-Lusog Milk Feeding Program will showcase how dairy enterprise in the province will prosper, ensuring that local pasteurized milk will reach more beneficiaries while improving the livelihood of local dairy farmers.

Governor Rodito will continue to provide job opportunities by expanding livelihood assistance to small and medium scale entrepreneurs, cooperatives, non-formal groups and associations under our own Isabela Recovery Initiatives to Support Enterprises (I-RISE) and Kabuhayan programs including assistance to marginalized farmers, and by providing subsidies to the transport sector.

Truly, mandates matter. Both fresh and renewed are as beneficial and important as a declaration of trust and support from the people. The fresh mandate will chart and sail the course even through rough waters – to reach the shores of new and better days.

ATTY. ELIZABETH CUREG-BINAG
Editor-In-Chief

THE SECOND TERM INAUGURATION AND OATH TAKING OF ISABELA GOVERNOR RODITO T. ALBANO III

“There are a lot of work ahead but with our strong faith in our loving God, and in partnership with Vice Governor Bojie Dy, our Sangguniang Panlalawigan and Local Chief Executives, and the invaluable support of our Congressmen, we will chart and sail a course even through rough waters, so we can reach the shores of new and better days.”

Governor Rodito T. Albano III



Gaining a fresh mandate with an overwhelming 670,367 votes in the last May 09, 2022 elections, Governor Rodolfo T. Albano III took his oath of office on June 29, 2022 at the Isabela Convention Center (ICON) Cauayan City, Isabela before Mayor Bernard Faustino M. Dy. With Gov. Albano as he took his oath were his wife Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Japan Atty. Mylene Garcia-Albano and son Rafael G. Albano, and his siblings 1st District Congressman Tonytpe Albano and Mrs. Mila Albano-Mamaug with her husband Cabagan Mayor Christopher Mamaug.

“Thank you very much for giving me a renewed mandate, my second term, as your provincial governor. Your overwhelming trust will be my inspiration to serve with honor, humility, faith and confidence, and to deliver what is best for our people and our province.”

This was the opening statement of Governor Rodito T. Albano III during his second term inauguration and oath-taking ceremony administered by Hon. Bernard Faustino M. Dy on June 29, 2022 at the Isabela Convention Center (ICON) in Cauayan City.

Albano won the gubernatorial race in May 2022 by a landslide with 670,367 votes. He ran on a platform of investing in people.

With Gov. Albano as he took his oath were his wife Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Japan Atty. Mylene Garcia-Albano and son Rafael G. Albano, and his siblings 1st District Congressman Tonytpe Albano and Mrs. Mila Albano-Mamaug with her husband Cabagan Mayor Christopher Mamaug.

ROAD TO ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Three years ago, Albano set the thrust of his administration – to invest in people – to uplift the lives of poor masses, making sure that the people are healthy, have food on their table, have good harvest and sustained income, have access to education, have jobs and livelihood opportunities.

“We kept that promise. When COVID-19 caught all of us off-guard, we acted swiftly, implementing programs, projects and activities to keep Isabeleños healthy and safe. We focused on promoting public health, while protecting our economy and taking good care of our people. We made sure that our vaccines reached even those in the remotest areas so that everybody will be safe,” he said.

Albano said he was aware of the struggles that the people have endured in the last two years, with

more than 2,000 deaths due to COVID-19.

Despite the challenges, Albano sees the province's path forward with optimism as numerous indicators and enabling conditions suggest that economic recovery is taking hold.

Albano pledged to improve the healthcare system in the province, and to deliver efficient preventive and rehabilitative healthcare for COVID-19, other diseases and emerging health emergencies.

“We will continue to upgrade our hospital services, facilities, and the over-all capability of the provincial government to deliver efficient preventive and rehabilitative healthcare for COVID-19, other diseases and emerging health emergencies. We are also poised to open a dialysis center in our five district hospitals to help our increasing dialysis patients with funds from our share of the tobacco excise

tax,” he said.

Albano also assured Isabeleños that he will strengthen the economy by giving assistance to the pandemic-affected families for them to recover.

“We will strengthen our aid to those who need the most and act at a scale commensurate to the present challenges. Strengthening our economy and helping small businesses to recover will be among our top priorities because the right mix of investment in physical and human capital can usher sustained growth. Assistance to all sectors will be stepped up, so that our communities will recover fast from the losses sustained during the pandemic,” he said.

Albano said his administration will respond to the strong recommendation of the Economic Development Cluster of NEDA to embark on programs that would generate more job opportunities towards a post-pandemic economic rebound by expanding livelihood assistance to small and medium scale entrepreneurs, cooperatives, non-formal groups and associations under the Isabela Recovery Initiatives to Support Enterprises (I-RISE) and Kabuhayan programs.

He also laid out his plan on assisting the marginalized farmers and providing subsidies to the transport sector to cushion the impact of soaring fuel prices.

ISABELA AS ‘FOOD BASKET OF THE NORTH’

Gov. Albano said the focal point of Isabela’s economic roadmap will be on agricultural development with all roads leading to agriculture as the province firms up its status as the Food Basket of the North. This will be done by securing food sufficiency through support services, integrated assistance to rice and corn farmers, fisher folks, livestock raisers and agricultural cooperatives.

“We will venture into palay procurement to boost the productivity and income of our small farmers – a timely response to the demand for an assured and reasonably priced farmers’ produce. Magkakaroong tayo ng Grains Complex sa Ipil, Echague na uupahan natin sa Land Bank sa halagang piso lamang kada taon. PhilMech has already pledged free mechanical dryers and rice mills for our use. Ang return of investment natin dito ay yung tulong, serbisyo at pagtugon sa mga pangangailangan ng mga magsasaka at maging stable ang presyo ng palay at bigas,” he said.

Gov. Albano beamed with pride that the flagship cooperative venture of Isabela, the Nagkakaisang Magsasaka ng Isabela Agricultural Cooperative or NMIAC, is a huge success.

“Isabela’s super cooperative was awarded a credit line of P450 Million by the DBP on October 12, 2019 under the DA’s RCEF program. The funds served as a start-up working capital for palay procurement from the members who were given premium price of P5.00 per kg., giving each member additional P20,000.00 for every 80 sacks of 50 kg. palay traded through the cooperative. NMIAC is now one of the biggest agricultural cooperative in the province with 8,520 small rice farmers-members having its own mega grains complex and a total asset of P447,858,004.50 in less than three years of its operation,” he said.

Gov. Albano also laid out his plan to complete the hauling trucks in every barangay, thus solving the mobility of farmers and their goods, and to answer high transportation cost.

To address the skyrocketing price of fertilizers, he said he will enhance the fertilizer subsidies of the provincial government.

“Bilang pagtugon sa hindi mapigilang pagtaas ng presyo ng abono, palalawigin natin ang fertilizer subsidies. With the available technology for local manufacture of biological fertilizers, pesticides and control agents, we will put up a production center for low cost and safe farm inputs to increase yield, lessen production cost, and increase the earnings of our farmers. Tataas pa ang kita ng mga magsasaka dahil bibilhin natin ang kanilang ani at may dagdag presyo sa pamamagitan ng ating price subsidy program,” he said.

Gov. Albano also said that the Busog-Lusog Milk Feeding Program of the provincial government will showcase how the dairy enterprise will prosper ensuring that local pasteurized milk is set to reach more beneficiaries while improving the livelihood of the local dairy farmers in the municipalities of Cabagan, San Pablo, Sta. Maria, Tumauini, Mallig, San Agustin, Echague, Ramon and Angadanan.

“We will invest more in our school children by ensuring that they are properly nourished. Lagi kong sinasabi na bale-wala lahat ng ating pagsisikap sa pagpapatayo ng mga imprastraktura at mga programang pang-edukasyon kung nagugutom o mahihina ang katawan ng ating mga kabataan dahil kulang sa nutrisyon,” he said.

ON FLOOD MITIGATION

Gov. Albano also laid out his plans in mitigating floods in the province through dredging and desilting projects.

“Paiigtingin pa natin ang flood mitigation, palalawakin ang dredging at desilting projects at kasabay nito, bubuhayin muli ang silted creeks at rivers at hihilingin natin sa national government na sementuhan ang irrigation canals upang mapabuti ang daloy ng tubig, mapigilan ang pagbaha at magkaroon ng sapat na patubig sa ating mga pananim. Kasama na rin ang pagtatanim ng mga puno sa watershed areas,” he said.

JOB AND LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES FOR ISABELEÑOS

Gov. Albano disclosed that he will continue to send farmers to South Korea for a five-month internship program to enhance their skills and knowledge and at the same time earn additional income.

“We will continue deploying farmers to South Korea through the Seasonal Agricultural Sector Development Exchange Program. The five-month internship program will enhance their knowledge, skills and experience, while learning modern agricultural technologies in South Korea. At the same time they will earn additional income for their families. Hindi hadlang ang pag-TNT ng mangilan-ngilan sa pagpapatuloy ng napakagandang programang ito upang maitaas ang antas ng pamumuhay ng ating mga magsasaka at mabigyan ng magandang kinabukasan ang kanilang mga anak,” he said.

The Governor shared that the provincial government awarded Sec. Silvestre Bello III the Gawad Dangal ng Isabela for his big contribution in the province through DOLE job and livelihood programs.

“Noong June 25, iginawad natin kay Sec. Silvestre Bello III ang Gawad Dangal ng Isabela as an expression of our gratitude for his great concern for our people pouring considerable funds to our province and helping our vulnerable and displaced workers through the TUPAD program, giving aid to 164,048 beneficiaries across the province, including the invaluable support to numerous students and unemployed young professionals through the Government Internship Program. Sa pamamagitan ng DOLE Integrated Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program, nagbigay pa ulit si Sec. Bello ng 127 Million Pesos para sa 31,050 beneficiaries sa ating lalawigan,” he said.

The 11th

Sangguniang Panlalawigan

P R O V I N C E O F I S A B E L A

(JUNE 30, 2022 - JUNE 30, 2025)

The 11th Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Isabela convened its inaugural session on July 12, 2022. Presiding Officer Vice Gov. Faustino “Bojie” Dy III committed his full support as an active partner of Gov. Rodito Albano, assuring that necessary local legislative measures will be passed to spur local growth and develop responsive, timely, and impactful programs that will strengthen, uplift, and enrich Isabeleños.

Here are the members of the 11th Sangguniang Panlalawigan:

1ST DISTRICT

Hon. DELFINITO EMMANUEL L. ALBANO
Hon. EMMANUEL JOSELITO B. AÑES

4TH DISTRICT

Hon. CLIFFORD R. RASPADO
Hon. VICTOR G. DY

2ND DISTRICT

Hon. ED CHRISTIAN S. GO
Hon. EDGAR R. CAPUCHINO

5TH DISTRICT

Hon. MANUEL FAUSTINO U. DY
Hon. EDWARD S. ISIDRO

3RD DISTRICT

Hon. MARY GRACE D. ARREOLA
Hon. RAMON JUAN N. REYES JR.

6TH DISTRICT

Hon. MARCO PAOLO A. MERIS
Hon. AMADOR A. GAFFUD JR.

Hon. Delfinito Emmanuel “MM” Albano of Isabela 1st district is the Majority Floor Leader of the 11th SPI.

In addition to the elected members from the six legislative districts, sectoral representatives were also appointed by Governor Rodito T. Albano III to the Provincial Board:

WOMEN’S SECTOR REPRESENTATIVE: Hon. LOURDES S. PANGANIBAN
AGRICULTURAL SECTOR REPRESENTATIVE: Hon. ADRIAN PHILIP S. BAYSAC
ICC SECTOR REPRESENTATIVE: Hon. MARGARETTE U. CHIN
LABOR SECTOR REPRESENTATIVE: Hon. HON. EVYN JAY C. DIAZ

With Ex-Officio Members as follows:

HON. DANTE G. HALAMAN

HON. DAX PAOLO C. BINAG

HON. ANTONIO S. HUI

Hon. Dante G. Halaman, Liga ng Mga Barangay Federation President and Hon. Dax Paolo C. Binag, Sangguniang Kabataan Federation President are still part of the 11th SP until the election and qualification of their successors pursuant to R.A. 11935. Hon. Antonio S. Hui retained his position as the Federation President of the Philippine Councilors’ League of Isabela.

MEET THE NEW MEMBERS OF THE 11TH SANGGUNIANG PANLALAWIGAN OF ISABELA



HON. MARY GRACE D. ARREOLA

A professor, **Hon. Mary Grace D. Arreola** ran under the Nationalist People's Coalition and won a seat at the Sangguniang Panlalawigan as a 3rd District Board Member. She is the wife of former three-term SP member Atty. Randolph Joseph P. Arreola.



HON. VICTOR G. DY

Hailing from a family of public servants, **Hon. Victor G. Dy** is the 4th District Board Member. He served as a Barangay Captain of San Fermin, Cauayan City, Isabela from 1998 to 2013. He also served as Liga ng Mga Barangay President and Ex-Officio Member of the Sangguniang Panlungsod of Cauayan City from 2001 to 2013.



HON. MANUEL FAUSTINO U. DY

Hon. Manuel Faustino U. Dy of San Manuel, Isabela won as 5th District Board Member. He served as the municipal mayor of San Manuel from 2019-2022.



HON. AMADOR A. GAFFUD JR.

A former Vice Mayor of a first-class municipality in the province, Echague, Isabela from 2010-2013, **Hon. Amador A. Gaffud Jr.** was elected as the 6th District Board Member.

SECTORAL REPRESENTATIVES

Joining the regular elected members are former Angadanan mayor Lourdes S. Panganiban, former City of Ilagan councilor Margarette Uy-Chin, and youth leader Evyn Jay C. Diaz from the City of Ilagan.



HON. LOURDES S. PANGANIBAN

Hon. Lourdes S. Panganiban is now the Women's Sector Representative of the province, succeeding former women representative Venus Grace T. Bautista. SP Panganiban served as a three-term mayor in the municipality of Angadanan, Isabela.



HON. MARGARETTE UY-CHIN

Hon. Margarette Uy-Chin was named the new Indigenous Cultural Communities Sector Representative taking over the seat of then SP Member Gretchen F. Valdez. She served as City Councilor of the City of Ilagan first from 2007-2010 and for three consecutive terms from 2013 to 2022.



HON. EVYN JAY C. DIAZ

Hon. Evyn Jay C. Diaz is the first Labor Sector Representative to the Sangguniang Panlalawigan. He was the SK Federation President of the City of Ilagan from 2010 to 2012 and Executive Assistant for Youth Affairs from 2012 to 2018.



BRO

“Kailangan niyong makapagtapos dahil kayong mga kabataan ang puhunan namin sa kapitolyo. Kapag hindi kayo nakapagtapos, malulugi kami pati ang inyong mga magulang. Kung hindi niyo na makayanan dahil sa kawalan ng pera, pumunta kayo sa amin. Sa inyo lahat ang pera ng kapitolyo. Hindi sa amin ‘yan. Kayo ang naghihirap para makalikom kami ng sapat na pera na ibabalik ulit namin sa inyo.”

Governor Rodito T. Albano III



INVESTING IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF NATION BUILDERS

“Kayo ang puhunan namin. Ang kita namin ay makita kayong makapagtapos at makamit ang inyong mga pangarap. Ang tagumpay ng probinsya ay ang inyong pagtatapos ng pag-aaral.”

This has been the noteworthy remark of Governor Rodito T. Albano III during every distribution of scholarship allowances in the different municipalities across the province.

As a manifestation of the unwavering commitment of Governor Rodito T. Albano III and Faustino “Bojie” Dy III to inclusive education, the Broje-Rodito (BRO) for Education continuously serves the Isabeleño youth encouraging them to study harder, pursue even their wildest dreams and aspirations, and be part of a more productive future.

Considered as the biggest and most comprehensive LGU Scholarship Program in the country, the BRO-Ed has now a total of 31,815 scholars as of 1st semester of 2021-2022 where 13,878 (43.62%) are children of small farmers enrolled in different campuses of the Isabela State University, Philippine Normal University and other higher education institutions within and outside the province.

The scholarship program constantly motivates small farmers and indigent parents to put their trust and confidence in the provincial government for the education of their children knowing that BRO-Ed guarantees their children’s opportunity to quality education.

To widen the scope of the scholarship program, Ordinance No. 2020-04-1 Series of 2020 was passed to accommodate students taking up degrees in Law, Medicine, and Theology, including masteral students where a total of 325 graduate scholars already benefited.

The elected Lider ni BRO (LIBRO) officers receive cash allowances

for their efforts being the governing organization of the BRO-Ed scholars. The BRO-Ed also extends financial assistance to licensure examinations takers for their review.

The Provincial Government of Isabela (PGI) envisions making the estimated 25,000 to 40,000 Isabeleño students who are children of small farmers and indigents to be scholars of BRO-Ed. Throughout the years, the PGI made sure that educational support of its constituents has always been in place.

GIVING BACK TO ISABELEÑO TOBACCO FARMERS

Furthermore, to encourage economic activity in the agricultural sector, especially in the tobacco industry in light of recent natural disasters and the effects of the pandemic to the economy, Gov. Rodito Albano III and Vice Gov. Faustino “Bojie” Dy III unceasingly deliver financial assistance to tobacco farmers in different municipalities.

Gov. Rodito disclosed that the tobacco excise tax law is primarily a health

measure meant to wean smokers from their addiction and discourage Filipinos from taking up this vice. **“Kaya lang dahil sa ayuda na ibinigay, dumami tuloy ng nagtatabako. Kaya ibinubuhos naming ngayon yung kinokolektang pera para sa tobacco farmers,”** he said.

The governor assured tobacco farmers that they will receive at least P30,000.00 worth of financial assistance from the provincial government in 2023 for their big contribution in the province.

Meanwhile, Vice Governor Faustino “Bojie” G. Dy III thanked the tobacco farmers for the taxes they have contributed, which funded infrastructures and other developments in the province.

The livelihood assistance was sourced from the Tobacco Excise Tax share of the Province of Isabela intended for tobacco farmers to help them become more self-reliant. Gov. Rodito vowed to continue to find ways to further strengthen and expand the programs to help them.



LANDBANK TURNS OVER GRAINS COMPLEX FOR PGI'S PALAY PROCUREMENT PROGRAM

The Landbank of the Philippines (LBP), officially turned over the Grains Complex located at Brgy. Ipil, Echague, Isabela to Gov. Rodito Albano III on April 22, 2022 as the lessee of the complex and as part of the P2-billion Loan Agreement with LBP for the Palay Procurement Program for Small Farmers of the Provincial Government of Isabela (PGI).

The Grains Complex is being leased by PGI at 1 peso per annum with an obligation to repair, rehabilitate and upgrade the facility including the typhoon-damaged warehouse and rice mill buildings.

The P2-billion approved loan at 2% interest per annum will be used as a startup or working capital for palay procurement operations in the amount of P1 billion. The remaining P1 billion will serve as a standby credit for investment in equipment and machineries.

Prior to this, the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PHilMech) pledged to grant the PGI free dryers and rice mills to be installed at the Grains Complex as part of PhilMech's level-up intervention in boosting rice production in the countryside.

The Provincial Government aims to venture into palay procurement program following the success of the Nagkakaisang Magsasaka ng Isabela Agricultural Cooperative (NMIAC) which,

after two years of operation, was able to acquire its own rice mill situated in a mega-complex.

Gov. Rodito stressed that the palay procurement program will boost the productivity and income of small farmers – a timely response to a call for an assured and reasonable price for their production while stabilizing the price of palay in the local market.

“Ang actual return of investment dito ay hindi yung kikitain ng probinsya. Ang kita ng probinsya rito ay yung tulong sa farmers para at least stable lang yung prices. Ang pinakaimportante rito ay nakatugon tayo doon sa farmers. Ang kita namin dito ay yung serbisyo sa tao,” Gov. Rodito explained.

Official turn over of the Grains Complex to Gov. Rodito T. Albano at Brgy. Ipil, Echague, Isabela on April 22, 2022.



“Ang actual Return of Investment dito ay hindi yung kikitain ng probinsya. Ang kita ng probinsya rito ay yung tulong sa farmers para at least stable lang yung prices. Ang pinakaimportante dito ay nakatugon tayo doon sa farmers. Ang kita namin dito ay yung serbisyo sa tao.”

PGI, PHILMECH INK MOA ON RPS-2 ESTABLISHMENT IN ISABELA

“Kailangan talaga i-empower yung matataas ang production, para yung sustainability tuloy-tuloy.”

DR. DIONISIO G. ALVINDIA, PHILMECH DIRECTOR



The Provincial Government of Isabela, headed by Gov. Rodito Albano III and Vice Gov. Faustino “Bojie” G. Dy III, sign MOA with PhilMech at Balai, Isabela Provincial Capitol, March 23, 2022.

The Provincial Government of Isabela and the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization

(PhilMech) inked a Memorandum of Agreement on the establishment of the Rice Processing System-2

in the province under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) Mechanization Program held at Balai, Provincial Capitol, Alibagu, City of Ilagan, Isabela on March 23, 2022.

In his message, PhilMech Director Dr. Dionisio G. Alvindia said that the establishment of RPS-2 in Isabela is part of their level-up intervention in boosting rice production through the introduction of new PhilMech technologies.

The MOA signing was led by Governor Rodito T. Albano III, Vice Governor Faustino “Bojie” G. Dy III, Dr. Dionisio G. Alvindia and Provincial Agriculturist Marites E. Frogoso, witnessed by Joel V. Dator, DA-PhilMech Chief in the Facility Management and Field Operations Division, and Dr. Michael Gragasín, Program Director for RCEF-Mechanization.

DA-PRDP, PGI BREAK GROUND P139M FARM-TO-MARKET ROAD TO BOOST DAIRY INDUSTRY

Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator Atty. Eduardo Cabantac underscored that the farm-to-market road, the PRDP’s Infrastructure Development Component (I-BUILD), will provide a climate-resilient transportation infrastructure in support to dairy production in the municipalities of Mallig and Quezon which were identified as the West Dairy Zone in Isabela.

To boost the dairy industry in the province, officials from the Department of Agriculture - Philippine Rural Development Program (DA-PRDP), Provincial Government of Isabela (PGI) and LGU-Quezon, officially broke ground for the rehabilitation and improvement of the 12.42-kilometer San Juan-Barucboc-Estrada-Dummon Farm-to-Market Road (FMR) in San Juan, Quezon, Isabela costing P139,916,440.24, July 20, 2022.

Provincial Planning and Development Coordinator Atty. Eduardo Cabantac underscored that the farm-to-market road, the PRDP’s Infrastructure Development Component (I-BUILD), will provide a climate-resilient transportation infrastructure in support to dairy production in the municipalities of Mallig and Quezon which were identified as the West Dairy Zone in Isabela.

The Enterprise Development Component (I-REAP) also supported the upgrading of the dairy processing facility in Mallig, Isabela and the Quezon Development Dairy Farmers Cooperative in Quezon, Isabela.

Cabantac also stressed that the rehabilitation and concreting of the farm-to-market road, including masonry for slope protection, road signages and reflectorized thermoplastic pavement markings, will support agricultural production of 5,000 farmers who cultivate 7,000 hectares. This will also ease the movement and cut travel time in transporting agricultural goods and commodities within the project influence areas covering the four barangays and other interconnecting barangays of the municipality of Quezon.

DA Regional Director Narciso Edillo urged the punong barangays of the four adjoining barangays and their constituents to involve themselves and do their part in strictly monitoring the road rehabilitation since they are the primary users of the project.

Mayor Jimmy Gamazon Jr. of Quezon, Isabela expressed his gratitude to DA and PGI officials for the project.



The 12.42-kilometer San Juan-Barucboc Estrada-Dummon Farm-To-Market Road (FMR) in San Juan, Quezon, Isabela.





ISABELA: THE EMERGING TOURIST DESTINATION

"Iniimbitahan namin kayo na mamasyal dito sa Isabela at tikman ang mga pagkain dito. Magugulat kayo. Malasa. Masarap. Organic. Masustansya. Kakaiba," said Gov. Rodito Albano III during the conclusion of LAKBAY PINAS television program which aired globally on the 3rd week of March 2022 at IBC 13, and on social media platforms Facebook and YouTube.

With the title, **"Isabela: The Emerging Tourist Destination,"** the episode featured the history of the Province of Isabela and the interviews with Gov. Albano and local chief executives on the development of business in the cities/municipalities and local tourism of the province, including the Isabeleños unique way of life, customs and traditions, food, songs and dances.

Executive producer, hosts and crews of Lakbay Pinas stayed three days from February 7 to 9, 2022 in the province to video shoot the province's attractions, tourist spots, travel destinations, landmarks and cultural dances.

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

Their first stop was at the private-owned Balay Segundo Museum located along the National Highway, Bugallon Proper in Ramon, Isabela. This is a repository of more than 100 paintings featuring

Filipino values and traditions from internationally-acclaimed Pinoy artists. It also exhibits a sampling of its ancient and antique coin collections including silver coins from South American countries and two biblical coins – the Shekel of Tyre, infamously known as Judas' Thirty Pieces of Silver.

Major tourist attractions were also featured such as the Magat Dam in Ramon; the ruins of the Old San Pablo Church; largest banga in Santa Maria; the giant butaka, Japanese tunnel and the Ilagan Sanctuary in the City of Ilagan.

AGRI-TOURISM

On agri-tourism, the Manalo Taguba Eco Park in Angadanan, Isabela featured its Mansion House, while the vertical farm at Saranay, Cabatuan boasted its mini zoo and ATV rides.

GASTRONOMIC TOURISM

Isabela is not far behind on its gastronomic tourism as it offers culinary and tasty delicacies unique to the province such as the local bulalo at Red Plate Food House in Mallig; the Pinoy samgyupsal at Empor Casa at Capirpiriwan, Cordon; local dishes at Mansaya's Barrio Grill and Restaurant in Ramon; the famous Pancit Cabagan; and moriecos in Cabatuan, Isabela.

CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Arts and crafts that provide livelihood opportunities in the communities were also featured like the Indigenous Enabled Craft, a loom weaving cottage industry in Brgy. Santos in Quezon, Isabela, as well as the pottery making in Santa Maria. The Isabela Dairy Enterprises also offers livelihood opportunities featuring the production and processing of dairy milk in Mallig, Isabela.

Culture and traditions in the form of dances are also preserved including the Balanban Dance, a Yogad dance performed at Cagayan River by Sangbayan Dance Company of Narra, Echague, while the Tribal Ibanag war dance Zambali was performed at Cabagan Square Park.

MODERN TOURISM



Cauayan City, dubbed as **"The Ideal City of the North"** also showcased its modern Isabela Convention Center (ICON), and Cauayan City Sports Complex.

The 30-minute Lakbay Pinas was capped by interviews of Gov. Rodito Albano III, Mayor Charlton Uy of Cabatuan, Mayor Jose Calderon of Mallig, Vice Mayor Antonio Miro Jr. of San Pablo, City Councilor Jayvee Diaz of the City of Ilagan and Provincial Tourism Officer Troy Alexander Miano.

LAKBAY PINAS

INTERVIEWS GOV.

RODITO ON ISABELA

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

“New frontier na parang mystique ba – kailangan mong pumunta dito sa Isabela para ma-discover mo yung pagkain at ma-appreciate ang ugali ng tao, yung nakikita mo, magugulat ka – uy, may ganito pala.”



Lakbay Pinas, now on its 3rd season, is a 30-minute television show at International Broadcasting Corporation. IBC 13 is aired globally and watched over social media platforms Facebook and Youtube.

“New frontier parang mystique ba – na kailangan mong pumunta dito sa Isabela para ma-discover mo yung pagkain at ma-appreciate ang ugali ng mga tao, yung makikita mo, magugulat ka – uy may ganito pala,” Gov. Rodito Albano III described when asked by Executive Producer Chit Luna of Luna Productions on how to describe Isabela tourism during his taped interview for IBC 13 television program **“Lakbay Pinas”** featuring tourist destinations, cultural dances, business opportunities and other landmarks that make a place unique, special and tourism friendly.

Ms. Chit Luna asked Gov. Rodito on how the provincial government fared in boosting the tourism industry to generate income.

“Ang concentration namin sa tourism ay una yung agri-farms. Pangalawa, meron kaming coastal areas dito, kaya lang sa kasamaang palad, noong medyo tapos na namin yung daan patungong coastal areas ay tinamaan kami ng bagyo at na-washout yung road, so magkakaroon ng rerouting at panibagong pagpapalano,” Gov. Rodito said.

ON TOURISM INDUSTRY

As to long term plan of the tourism industry in the province, Gov. Rodito said **“Kung mabukasan namin yung daan papuntang coastal towns at makita nilang maganda at mura na ang pamasaha ng eroplano papunta doon, this will spur tourism development.”**

The governor also said that the provincial government subsidized the airplane fare to coastal areas to the tune of P2,000 to P3,000 per passenger to help the residents of coastal areas.

ISABELA AS INVESTMENT HUB

The Province of Isabela as an investment hub, Gov. Rodito said that he supports renewable energy sources and will focus on food production.

“Mataba ang lupa dito sa valley dahil sa rivers and streams. Ngayon, nakatuon kami sa food production sa tulong ng DBP, Landbank and Department of Agriculture.”

On infrastructure projects like roads, Gov. Rodito said: **“Hindi muna kami magpo-focus masyado diyan kasi halos lahat ng kalye dito sa amin ay sementado na.”**

He stressed that the province is now focused on nutrition and health of the Isabeleños: **“Nag-umpisa kami sa pagpalaganap ng mga dairy farm para mabigyan ng gatas ang mga malnourished kids, lactating mothers at senior citizens. Kailangan mabigyan natin sila ng sustansya mula sa gatas.”**

ON HEALTH AND NUTRITION

“Tinulungan ako ng National Dairy Administration na siyang nagbigay ng Holstein na baka dito sa probinsya kasi very suitable

tayo sa cattle raising. May mga ilang bayan na rin na nagpo-produce ng Holstein at iko-cross breed sa Brahman para madaling alagaan at makapag-produce ng gatas. At least may livelihood sila. Bibilhin ng probinsya yung gatas para ipainom din sa ating mga mamamayan na nangangailangan talaga,” he further explained.

ON PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Luna also asked Gov. Rodito the secret why the Province of Isabela is way ahead in terms of progress and development.

“Basta naka-concentrate ka lang at saka yung pera ng probinsya ipamigay mo lang sa tao, okay na. Ginagamit namin yung tobacco tax at budget ng probinsya para mabigyan ko ng mga bagong truck ang lahat ng mga barangay, saka mga forward para magamit nila sa paghakot ng mga produkto ng aming mga magsasaka. Inuna ko yung mga malalayong lugar na hindi halos maabot ng mga sasakyan at mga forward para matulungan nila ang mga kababayan doon lalo na yung mga farmers natin na maibaba ang kanilang mga produkto sa bayan,” he concluded.



RTA gives assistive devices to PWDs, equipment to fisherfolks

Ever since, Gov. Albano has been committed to improving the lives of every Isabeleño through the government's assistance programs.

“Pera niyo ito, kaya kahit maliliit lang na tulong, sinisikap kong maibigay sa inyo nang maayos,”

Governor Rodito T. Albano said during the distribution of assistive devices to persons with disability and fishing equipment to fisherfolks held at Balai, Provincial Capitol, Alibagu, City of Ilagan, Isabela on March 09, 2022.

Thirteen PWDs were given assistive devices which include prosthetics, wheelchairs, crutches, canes, and walkers for their safety and to assist them in

their daily tasks, thus enabling them to attain independence.

“Yan ang gusto ko sa inyo, yung nag-iisip kayo ng pwede niyong gawin,” he said addressing the PWDs who asked for livelihood assistance despite being handicapped.

“Iisip pa kami ng pwede naming gawin para sa inyo,” he added.

A total of 86 fisherfolks also received fishing gears like fishnets and boats to boost their

livelihood, especially those who have to **“scratch and peck”** to earn for a living.

Gov. Rodito is committed to improving the lives of every Isabeleño through various assistance packages. **“Basta’t kaya ko, ibibigay ko,”** he emphasized.

Aside from the assistive devices, PWDs also received grocery packs from the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office.



Albano, Dy thank FWM, CIPI for free wheelchairs for Isabeleños

Governor Rodito T. Albano III and Vice Governor Faustino "Bojie" G. Dy III with some of the participants of the Free Wheelchair Mission during the luncheon hosted by the province as part of their 3-day FWM Gift Mobility Program on August 3-5, 2022.

Gov. Rodito Albano III and Vice Governor Bojie Dy expressed their gratitude to the Children International Philippines Inc., (CIPI) and Free Wheelchair Mission (FWM) for choosing Isabeleños as beneficiaries of their wheelchair mission and for the many items they have shared to the needy individuals of the province during the luncheon hosted by the province as part of their 3-day FWM Gift Mobility Program held on August 3-5, 2022.

"Maraming salamat sa inyong walang sawang pagtulong at pagbibigay. Kahit gaano kaliit ang bagay na kanilang natatangap, hindi natin

alam kung gaano kalaki ang ibinibigay natin na tuwa at kaligayahan sa kanila," Gov. Albano said in his welcome message.

He also said that the province shares the same mission with FWM and CIPI which is to work together to invest in the lives of children and youth by providing them with a life-transforming gift of mobility, giving them hope, freedom, and independence just like what Isabela has been doing in its Sagip Mata, Sagip Buhay, and Handog Tulong program.

"Kaya kami, parang kayo rin, nag-iinvest din sa mga tao lalong lalo na yung mga

taong nangangailangan at mga disabled. Salamat dahil nabibigyan ninyo sila ng pag-asa sa buhay," he concluded.

Vice Gov. Dy likewise extended his gratitude to the FWM-CIPI team and welcomed all the participants from all over the Philippines.

"At kami po'y nagpapasalamat din sapagkat napasaya ninyo ang probinsya ng Isabela, welcome po dito sa sentro ng agrikultura ng bansang Pilipinas," he said.



move
for mobility



Dengue is prevalent across the Philippines, making it a serious threat to public health. The country's outbreaks are largely seasonal, with most episodes occurring during the wet season. In Isabela, dengue cases have already surpassed the threshold limit this year with 3,179 cases as of August 3, 2022 compared to just 71 incidents in 2021.

With the alarming surge in dengue cases in the province, **"Todas Dengue, Todo na 'to"** campaign was relaunched on June 25, 2022 for the ninth time. This whole-of-province and multi-sectoral approach was carried out to eliminate the breeding areas of dengue-carrying mosquitoes.

The biggest, most aggressive and most comprehensive campaign became a reminder to Isabeleños to do their part in combatting dengue throughout the year.

From the data of the Provincial Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit (PESU) for the period January to August 3, 2022, the City of Ilagan recorded the highest number of dengue cases with 313 followed by

Alicia with 218, Cauayan with 194, San Mariano with 185, Tumauini with 178, Jones with 174, Gamu with 162, San Mateo with 158, Cabagan with 130, and Roxas with 113.

"Mas mataas po ang cases natin ngayon kumpara sa dalawang taon na lumipas," PESU Coordinator Arlene Martinez said while explaining that the implementation of the 5S strategy should be strengthened to avoid reaching the epidemic threshold. This approach urged the public to search and destroy mosquito breeding sites; uphold self-protection like using of insect repellents; seek early consultation at the nearest health care facility; support fogging, spraying, and misting in hot spot areas; and sustain hydration. She also emphasized that there is a need to intensify education and information campaign on dengue awareness and prevention.

As the high percentage of schools were reopened for in-person classes, Provincial Administrator Noel Manuel Lopez urged the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (PDRPMC) to prioritize the schools in fogging operations. This

was affirmed by Vice Governor Faustino "Bojie" Dy III who directed that every barangay should have officials in charge of the monitoring and assessment of the cleanliness of the surroundings.

"Kailangan talaga maging conscious tayo. Kailangan buwan-buwan mayroong assessment sa mga barangay kung gaano kalinis at paano natin mapapanatiling malinis ito para maiwasan natin ang pagdami ng kaso ng dengue," Vice Gov. Dy underscored.

With the full support and assistance of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)-Isabela, Local Government Units (LGUs), Liga ng mga Barangay (LNB)-Isabela Chapter, Department of Education (DepEd)-Isabela, Philippine National Police (PNP), Philippine Army (PA), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), cooperatives, public and private hospitals, banks, higher education institutions, markets, households, non-government institutions and other government agencies, a giant leap in the fight against the dengue outbreak in the province took place.

PGI ALLOTS 30M FOR ASF-HIT HOG RAISERS IN ISABELA

The highly contagious African Swine Fever (ASF) has adversely crippled the country's swine industry. The livestock sector saw its production decline by 17%, according to Philippine Statistics Authority.

In response to the problem, the Provincial Government of Isabela has allotted 30 million pesos for the greatly devastated ASF-hit hog raisers. This is to gradually boost the local swine industry towards recovery, to continuously provide farmers with needed technical and financial assistance, to manage and control ASF, and subsequently to revive the Isabela swine industry.

The PGI, through the Provincial Veterinary Office (PVET), provided two (2) five-month-old gilts each to the 311 qualified beneficiaries in the six districts as part of the province's Recovery and Repopulation Program to ASF-affected Swine Raisers. The beneficiaries were registered at the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA) Program and had five heads and above swine mortality.

Provincial Veterinarian Dr. Belina Barboza encouraged the hog raisers-beneficiaries to give importance to the program to speed up the swine reproduction/repopulation following the ASF outbreak in the province.

The program is pursuant to the Department of Agriculture's Administrative Order No. 06, series of 2021, entitled Guidelines on the Implementation of the Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Repopulation Assistance Program for ASF-affected and Non-ASF-Affected Areas.

"Ang ating mahal na gobernador, kasama ang bise gobernador, ay patuloy na tinitignan kung ano ang maitutulong ng provincial government sa inyo para mabilis maka-recover ang ating swine industry sa Isabela. Hinihiling po namin na pahalagahan ninyo ang programang ito. Nakikiusap po kami na paigtingin ang various measures na itinuturo sa inyo," she said.

Dr. Emil June Ranchez, municipal agriculturist of Delfin Albano, thanked Governor Rodito and the PVET for supporting the hog raisers affected by ASF in the province.

"Nais ko pong pasalamatan ang butihing gobernador dahil nag-

allocate siya ng pondo para mabigyan ng panimula ang mga hog raisers na tinamaan ng ASF. Salamat din sa assistance ng PVET Office sa walang sawang pagtulong at paggabay sa amin," he said.

PGI is a partner of Department of Agriculture in the implementation of ASF indemnification payments to the affected hog raisers.

The program is also pursuant to the Department of Agriculture's Administrative Order No. 06, series of 2021, entitled Guidelines on the Implementation of the Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Repopulation Assistance Program for ASF-affected and Non-ASF-Affected Areas.

ASF-hit hog raisers transfer the gilts from the PGI pig truck to their "kulong-kulong" on December 9, 2022 in Delfin Albano, Isabela.

MAKING FARMERS' DREAMS COME TRUE

On his inaugural address at the Isabela Convention Center, Cauayan City on June 29, 2022, Gov. Rodito Albano III underscored that the province will continue to deploy farmers to South Korea through the Seasonal Agricultural Sector Development Exchange Program. The five-month internship program will enhance the knowledge, skills and experience of our farmers while learning modern agricultural technologies and at the same time earn income for their families.

Gaining practical experience and techniques in modern farming are the most valuable mementos the Isabela farmer-interns will bring home after their five-month immersion to the Seasonal Agricultural Sector Development Exchange Program in South Korea. But there's more to this than what meets the eye.

Separation from family and loved ones was the most difficult part of being in South Korea for five months, but with her sights set on augmenting family income, the sacrifices she made by leaving home was worth it in the end. **"Kailangan para makatulong sa pamilya sa kanilang pangangailangan. Kahit mahirap, basta kumikita at nakakatulong at matuto. Sipag lang ang kailangan sa Korea,"** shared Sharlene Gay Dulay of Casibarang Norte, Cabagan, Isabela, who was deployed in Jinan.

The Farmers Internship Program is an opportunity for farmers to experience other culture, and to gain confidence and learn farming techniques to prepare them for a

good future in agriculture and share the best agricultural practices they learned upon their return.

The best part of being a paid farmer-intern is that you get a hands-on experience in different areas of farming and about life.

Mary Joy Angel from Purok 1, San Juan, City of Ilagan, shared her insights: **"Sa Korea, sa loob ng limang buwan nasubukan ko ang mahihirap na trabaho, pero nakaya ko at natutuhan na kahit anong hirap na sitwasyon ay makakaya mo kung may pagpupursige sa buhay. Challenging, exciting, kasi maraming bagong aral na natutuhan sa pagsasaka. Walang mahirap sa taong may mataas na pangarap."**

Mary Joy, who lost his PWD son while in Jinan, still expressed gratitude to the program: **"Malaki ang naitutulong sa akin**

ng programa dahil nasubukan ng pamilya ko ang guminhawa. Nasustentuhan ko ang pangangailangan ng PWD kong anak. Malaking tulong po ito noong araw na nawala sa akin ang anak ko."

Asked if she still wants to go back to Korea, if given the second chance, Mary Joy said: **"Gustong-gusto ko pong makabalik agad. Marami pa akong planong gustong matupad para sa pamilya ko. Apat pa po yung anak ko at gusto ko pang magtrabaho at makapag-ipon ako."**

Heidi Joy Dizon of Yeban Sur, Benito Soliven, Isabela expressed optimism for the continuity of the program: **"Sana ipagpatuloy pa nila ang ganitong programa dahil madami silang natutulungan lalo na sa aming mga small farmers na mahihirap."**

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Heidi Joy Dizon of Yeban Sur, Benito Soliven, Isabela

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Challenging, exciting, kasi maraming bagong aral na natutuhan sa pagsasaka. Walang mahirap sa taong may mataas na pangarap."

Mary Joy Angel from Purok 1, San Juan, City of Ilagan

For most of the small farmers in Isabela, making innovations and improvements in farming was only a dream. Their financial incapacities to pursue training and to acquire knowledge and skills in advanced farming techniques are aggravated by the increase in the price of farm inputs and the regular occurrence of natural calamities.

Gov. Rodito Albano has seen these struggles among farmers as an opportunity to carry out its commitment to further enhance and strengthen the capability of the agricultural sector by engaging the local farmers to participate in the Agricultural Development Exchange Program to South Korea.

The paradigm shift entailed in the farmers' internship program invigorates the Isabeleño farmers knowing that they will not remain as lowly farmers. Embracing the program has become their hope in the realization of their dreams - earning while learning.

THE BEGINNING

It was Tarlac Governor Susan Yap and Tarlac City Mayor Maria Cristina C. Angeles who both introduced the Seasonal Agricultural Internship Program to Gov. Albano which has been successfully forged and implemented the program for so many years now between Tarlac City and several counties in South Korea. Mayor Angeles informed Gov. Albano that in case Tarlac City or even the whole province of Tarlac would not be able to provide the manpower requirements, she will introduce and recommend the Province of Isabela being the top agricultural province in Northern Luzon.

FORGING PARTNERSHIPS

The general terms of the Farmers Internship Program was to promote mutual cooperation in the field of agriculture between the Province of Isabela and counties in South Korea. Gov. Albano saw this program as a golden opportunity to promote Isabela as the best human resource for farmers in the Philippines.

Being in the forefront of the service and cognizant of the immense benefits the people of Isabela will derive from the mutual partnership, Gov. Albano signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in behalf of the province with the counties of Jinan, Wanju and Yanggu, South Korea on March 18, 2022 at the Capitol Amphitheater via Zoom.

SCREENINGS, INTERVIEWS, PASSPORTING



Initial screening of farmers by the team from Korea in coordination with the PGI who interviewed the farmer-applicants

Early this year, the Local Government Units (LGUs), through their respective City/Municipal Agriculture Officers (C/MAOs) conducted the initial screening of farmers based on the following minimum requirements – 30 years of age, married with at least one child, physically fit, no tattoos, and with passports. The farmer-applicants were interviewed and their agility was tested. A total of 5,690 farmers were screened across the province.

PASSPORT ON WHEELS SA KAPITOLYO

The PGI assisted 394 farmers in securing passports with validity of ten (10) years. The Passport on Wheels (POW) was conducted through the DFA Mobile Passporting Section at the Provincial Capitol on April 26-27, 2022. The passport fee of P1,250.00 per farmer was shouldered by the provincial government and the passports were given to the farmers for free.

This is one of the interventions of Gov. Rodito to expedite the issuance of passports to farmer-applicants that will not require them to secure an appointment which is very hard to obtain considering the very limited slots given by the DFA. The farmers also did not have to travel to the DFA offices for the processing and validation procedures.



Conduct of the Passport on Wheels (POW) at the Isabela Provincial Capitol on April 26 - 27, 2022 for qualified farmers

THE MEDICAL CITY CLARK CONDUCTS MEDICAL SCREENING OF FARMERS IN ISABELA

Gov. Albano sought the assistance of The Medical City Clark, an accredited health facility in the country recognized in South Korea for the farmers' internship program. To eliminate the need for the farmers to travel Clark City in securing medical clearance, the medical examination was conducted by the staff of the Medical City Clark in the Provincial Capitol. The fee of P2,500.00 per farmer was shouldered by the provincial government as directed by Governor Rodito.

The Medical City Clark team went beyond their comfort zone at Clark City, Pampanga to the Province of Isabela, bringing with them an innovative healthcare facility, Mobile Imaging, and Laboratory for the X-ray examination to determine the fitness of farmers joining the internship program.

A total of 208 farmers underwent medical check-ups on March 22, 2022, held at Isabela Multi-Purpose Evacuation Center, Capitol Compound, Alibagu, City of Ilagan, Isabela.



Mobile Imaging and Laboratory for the X-ray examination to ensure medical and physical fitness of farmers joining the internship program

VISA APPLICATION

Visa application of the farmers was also done by the PGI Team. NBI Clearance, VaxCert, Passport, and Medical Results were gathered and brought to the Korean Embassy on March 29, 2022 for the first batch of 120 farmers bound to Yanggu, South Korea.

Undergoing the rigid review of documents at the embassy, only 92 applicants were granted visa for five months from April 5 to September 6, 2022, comprising the first group of farmers bound to Yanggu County for the internship program.

FIRST BATCH: SAFE TOUCHDOWN IN SOUTH KOREA

The first dispatch of 92 all-male, with age bracket from 30 to 40 years old, hail from the cities of Ilagan and Cauayan, municipalities of Cabagan, Tumauni, Roxas, Naguilian and San Isidro.

"I'm sending these people to you in good faith, from the understanding that they are going there dahil sa programang ito and to earn money and not to become slaves,"

Gov. Albano underscored during the send-off in reference to Korean partners who will take care and assist the farmer-interns, while assuring their safety and protection.

Gov. Albano wished all the farmer-interns good luck, sharing insights: **"It's not where you are, but it's where you want to be and to continue seizing growth opportunities and discover all possibilities while chasing your big dream for your family and to make the Province of Isabela proud."**

On April 5, 2022, the 92 farmer-interns comprising Isabela's first batch to the Seasonal Agricultural Sector Development Exchange Program to South Korea. The farmer-interns arrived at Seoul Incheon International Airport in South Korea early morning of April 6, 2022.

The Seasonal Agricultural Sector Development Exchange Program to South Korea dispatched a total of 266 farmers in six deployments to Yanggu, Jinan, and Wanju counties for the period April 5 to September 3, 2022.

On November 17, 2022, 20 farmers who finished their first contract were strongly recommended by their respective farm owners, and re-entered Jinan County for their second internship, bringing the total dispatch to 286. As of writing, the 20 re-entrants are still in Jinan County.



CA CONFIRMS GARCIA-ALBANO'S APPOINTMENT AS AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN; DY APPOINTED AS ENVOY TO SWITZERLAND

The Commission on Appointments on September 21, 2022 confirmed the appointment of former Davao City Second District Representative Mylene Garcia-Albano as the first Philippine woman Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Japan.

Garcia-Albano is the wife of Isabela Governor Rodito Albano III, and was a third placer in the 1990 Philippine bar examination.

In her opening speech, the former lawmaker said Japan is one of the country's most important and reliable partners.

"It is among our top sources of trade, investment, tourism, and our biggest source of development assistance," she said.

According to her, around 300,000 Filipinos live and work in Japan,

making it the largest overseas Filipino worker (OFW) community in Asia. Facing members of the foreign affairs panel, she vowed to "work actively" to protect the welfare of some 300,000 Filipinos in Japan.

"I will show them what women can do, especially as the first woman ambassador to represent our country to Japan," Garcia-Albano said.

Garcia-Albano said her lack of experience in foreign service will not hinder her from performing her duties, adding that her ability to speak and convince people about the advocacies of the government can help.

The Commission on Appointments (CA) on December 14, 2022 also confirmed Bernard Faustino Dy as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Swiss Confederation with concurrent jurisdiction over the Principality of Liechtenstein.

Sen. Francis Tolentino called Bernard Dy as the first sports ambassador as he manifested his full support for his confirmation as the Philippine ambassador to Switzerland.

During the meeting of the Commission on Appointments' Committee on Foreign Affairs on the ad interim appointment of Dy, Tolentino said that many sports governing bodies are based in Switzerland therefore, Dy will be technically a sports ambassador.

Dy thanked President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and the Commission of Appointments for their trust and confidence in him.

"Malugod po nating tinatanggap ang bagong hamon na magsilbi sa ating bayan bilang Kinatawan ng ating Republika sa Swiss Confederation and Principality of Liechtenstein. Taos puso po ang ating pasasalamat sa ating butihing Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. sa tiwala at kumpiyansa na ipinamalas sa atin. Maraming salamat po sa mga myembro ng Commission on Appointments sa tiwala at suporta," he said.

RA 11882

SIGNED INTO LAW

Principally authored by 1st District Representative Congressman Antonio “Tony” T. Albano as House Bill 10180 in the 18th Congress, RA 11882, an act increasing the bed capacity of the Gov. Faustino N. Dy, Sr. Memorial Hospital in the City of Ilagan, Province of Isabela from one hundred (100) to five hundred (500) beds, and appropriating funds therefor, has been signed into law on June 29, 2022.

RA 11882 is a manifestation of Cong. Albano’s genuine concern for the health and welfare of the Isabeleños.

H. No. 10180

Republic of the Philippines
Congress of the Philippines
Metro Manila
Eighteenth Congress
Third Regular Session

Begun and held in Metro Manila, on Monday, the twenty-sixth day of July, two thousand twenty-one.

[REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11882]

AN ACT INCREASING THE BED CAPACITY OF THE GOV. FAUSTINO N. DY, SR. MEMORIAL HOSPITAL IN THE CITY OF ILAGAN, PROVINCE OF ISABELA FROM ONE HUNDRED (100) TO FIVE HUNDRED (500) BEDS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. The authorized bed capacity of the Gov. Faustino N. Dy, Sr. Memorial Hospital in the City of Ilagan, Province of Isabela is hereby increased from one hundred (100) to five hundred (500) beds. Any future increase in capacity shall be consistent with its hospital development plan that shall be prepared by the Chief of Hospital of the Gov. Faustino N. Dy, Sr. Memorial Hospital, and submitted to the Department of Health (DOH).

Prior to stepping down from office, former president Rodrigo Duterte, signed RA 11882 on June 29, 2022, increasing the bed capacity of Gov. Faustino N. Dy, Sr. Memorial Hospital in the City of Ilagan, Isabela.

The GFNDy Hospital, which currently has 100 beds, will soon have 500 beds based on RA 11882.

The law mandates the upgrading of the existing professional healthcare services and facilities of the hospital to conform with the mandated increase in bed capacity. It also provides the corresponding increase in the workforce including doctors, nurses, and support personnel.

Gov. Rodito Albano III expressed his gratitude to former president Duterte and the 18th Congress for enacting the law improving health facilities and services in the Province of Isabela which was among the priority programs he declared during his inaugural address on June 29, 2022 at Isabela Convention Center (ICON), Cauayan City.

TOWARDS ECONOMIC RECOVERY

PGI implements livelihood, emergency employment programs

With the aim of providing and expanding access to employment and livelihood opportunities for all Isabeleños, Governor Rodito T. Albano III and Vice Governor Faustino G. Dy III have taken the lead in providing opportunities for income-generating activities and livelihood development to reduce poverty and inequality in the province.

ISABELA RECOVERY INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT ENTERPRISES (I-RISE)

With Governor Albano's assurance that no one should be left out in terms of access to the benefits that the provincial government provides, the Isabela Recovery Initiatives to Support Enterprises (I-RISE), a priority program of the provincial government under the Executive Agenda of Social Protection, continuous to balance the support given to the formal and the informal sectors. With the I-RISE Program, the informal sectors are given the chance to improve their economic status through financial grants and rice support.

For 2022, the Provincial Cooperative, Livelihood and Enterprise Development Office (PCLEDO) received a total of 11,781 applications from individual informal micro and small entrepreneurs – 47 from various cooperatives and 11 from associations – for a total of 11,839. The applications were validated by the PCLEDO and 3,475 applications were processed with 123 already released while the remaining approved applications are scheduled for release in the first quarter of 2023.

LIVELIHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

A total of 3,876 members from 117 associations and 369 individual beneficiaries already received livelihood assistance in the form of raw materials, equipment, tools and jigs, and other support services necessary in setting up or enhancing their businesses. The DOLE Integrated Livelihood Program (DILP), also known as the Kabuhayan Program, takes care of the capacity-building on

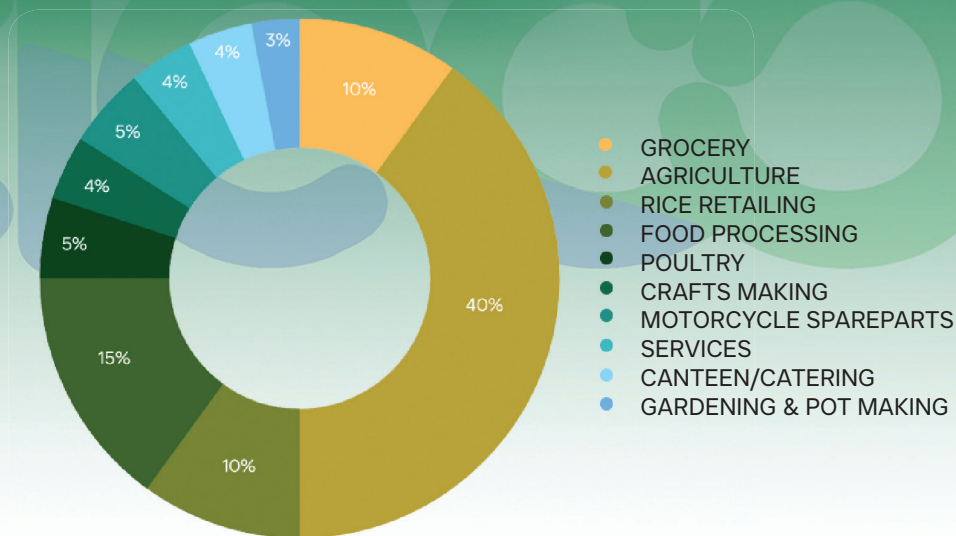


Chart 1. Summary of livelihood projects per category. 40% are agricultural-related businesses. Marketing and production of value-added products from the agriculture industry accounts as one of the highest income generating activities in the province. Other livelihood categories include Food Processing with 15%, and Grocery and Rice Retailing with both 10%.

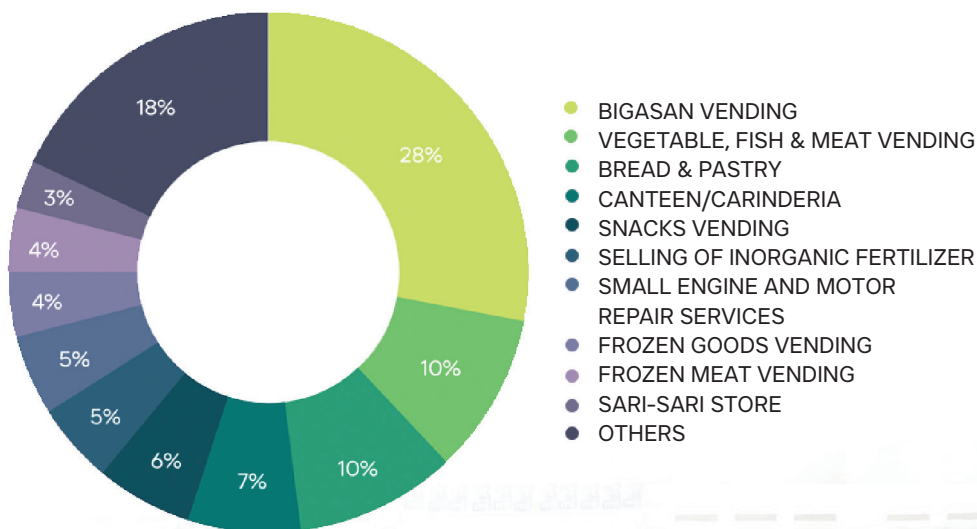


Chart 2. Summary of individual livelihood projects per category. The 28% of approved livelihood projects from individuals is Rice (Bigasan) Vending. Other categories include Frozen Meat and Goods vending with 10%.



For 2022, the provincial government, in close coordination with the DOLE – Isabela Field Office and the respective Public Employment Services Office (PESO) Managers of the local government units, was able to assist a total of 55,323 beneficiaries plus 11,266 profiled beneficiaries for implementation on the first quarter of 2023, giving us a total of 66,590 assisted beneficiaries.

livelihood for the vulnerable and marginalized sector which enables them to start individual or group livelihood projects and to grow into viable and sustainable businesses.

With a project cost of P53,988,428.57, 4,245 beneficiaries already benefited. The approved livelihood projects are those that support the needs of workers and the development needs of the community, particularly Agribusiness, retail trade, local-based industries, support to tourism, and marketing and production.

The awarding of livelihood assistance was held on various dates at the Isabela Multi-Purpose Evacuation Center, the PCLEDO compound, and in various community centers in the province from June to October of 2022.

ISABELA RECORDS THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF TUPAD BENEFICIARIES

Supplementing the Kabuhayan Program is the Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers Program (TUPAD) with DOLE. The TUPAD Program is a community-based package assistance that provides emergency employment for displaced workers, underemployed and seasonal workers, for a specified number of days depending on the nature of work to be performed.

The program provided beneficiaries with emergency employment for a minimum of 10 days but not exceeding 30 days. Mostly, beneficiaries performed tasks such as maintenance or cleaning of public facilities and infrastructures like schools and health centers, declogging of canals, and clearing of surroundings.

In 2022, the province had the highest number of assisted TUPAD beneficiaries in the region.

A total of 18,935 beneficiaries were hired in the first quarter of 2022 with a total project cost of P74,149,460.00. In the same year, P89,758,300.00 was awarded to the provincial government benefiting 24,259 beneficiaries and implemented in the second quarter of 2022. In the third quarter, an additional P100,000,000.00 was awarded to the province to benefit 23,395 beneficiaries. The first tranche amounting to 50,000,000.00 was implemented in December of 2022 for 12,129 beneficiaries.

The second tranche is scheduled for implementation in the first quarter of 2023.

For 2022, the provincial government, in close coordination with the DOLE-Isabela Field Office and the respective Public Employment Services Office (PESO) Managers of the local government units, was able to assist a total of 55,323 beneficiaries plus 11,266 profiled beneficiaries for implementation on the first quarter of 2023, giving us a total of 66,590 assisted beneficiaries.

CONVERGENCE APPROACH

The task of reviving the economy is not easy and requires the help of other agencies and stakeholders. As such, a convergence approach of initiatives has been continuously implemented including the conduct of

livelihood skills training by the Technical Education and Skills Training Authority, Department of Science and Technology and Department of Trade and Industry, and the post-implementation activity of continuing technical and business advisory services to ensure efficiency, productivity, and sustainability of awarded livelihood projects.

This convergence of initiatives, in turn, will allow beneficiaries to take proactive actions that can improve their condition of living with less dependence on the government and would enhance their income-generating capacity amidst the threat of the persisting pandemic and other economic challenges.





PBBM APPOINTS RTA AS RDC2 CHAIR

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. signed the appointment of Gov. Rodito Albano III to serve as chairman of the Regional Development Council II (RDC2) for the next three years.

Pres. Marcos Jr. also appointed Mr. Christian R. Guzman, a private sector representative (PSR) for Health, Education and Manpower Development, as co-chair.

The RDC is the highest planning and policy-making body in the region. It serves as the counterpart of the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) Board at the sub-national level that coordinates and sets the direction of all economic and social development efforts in the region. It also serves as a forum where local efforts can be related and integrated with regional and national development initiatives.

Gov. Rodito also served as RDC2 Chair during 2019-2022. Under his stint, the Region was able to cope with what seems to be crisis after crisis, including months of lockdown, community quarantines induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, and various calamities such as Typhoon Ulysses, African Swine Fever, and the Ukraine-Russia conflict which caused skyrocketing prices on gasoline, fertilizers and basic commodities.

The crises did not hinder RDC2 from achieving significant accomplishments under Gov. Rodito as chair. He adopted the Cagayan Valley Regional Recovery Program which outlines the framework of finding ways to resume socio-economic activities while sustaining efforts to manage the pandemic, as well as identifying appropriate government interventions and policies that facilitate transition into the new phase anchored on the new normal.

RDC-2 MAIDEN MEETING FOR 2022-2025

Regional Development Council (RDC-2) Chairman Gov. Rodito Albano III presided the 125th Regular Business Meeting on December 13, 2022 at the GFNDy Sr. Session Hall, Provincial Capitol, Alibagu, City of Ilagan, Isabela. It was the maiden meeting for his 2022-2025 term and the last for calendar year 2022.

Joining Governor Rodito is the new RDC-2 Co-Chairman Mr. Christian R. Guzman with Nueva Vizcaya Governor Carlos Padilla, NEDA Regional Director Dionisio Ledres Jr. and Assistant Regional Director Ferdinand Tumalian.

The Council confirmed the Geographic Private Sector Representative Mr. Daniel

Narag of Cagayan, Mr. Charles Lim of Isabela and Teresita Acosta of Nueva Vizcaya and members of the 12 agencies as Special Non-Voting Members (SNVMs) for the 2022-2025 term.

Several agenda items from various sectors were deliberated. Proposed projects and programs were endorsed while others were remanded to committee level for further study.

Among the programs, projects and policies adopted are the National Strategy for Financial Inclusion 2022-2028; the Revised Social Protection Operation Framework; the Pagtanaw 2050, a Philippine focused science, technology and innovation foresight and strategic plan; and the use of the Cagayan Valley Tourism Brand Logo and mobile app.

PhilHealth Regional Vice President Retired BGen Llewelyn Binasoy reported the status of claims of government hospitals in the region. He reported that PhilHealth Region 2 was not lagging in the payment of claims.

The Sustainable Tobacco Enhancement Program (STEP) 2021 to 2025 which was proposed by the National Tobacco Industry-Region 2 was remanded to the



Committee on Social Development (CSD) for further deliberations before the RDC-2 could act on the proposal.

The concern raised by PLGU Cagayan and presented by the DENR was endorsed subject to some amendments regulating the use of the herbicide glyphosate, while the request of Tuguegarao City Development Council to establish an Apostille Service at the DFA-Tuguegarao Consular Office was endorsed. The request for funding of the proposed Free-Wifi Project for all Project

to the DICT with 233 access points in the provinces of Cagayan, Nueva Vizcaya, Isabela, and Quirino as well as the request for funding of the proposed establishment of Provincial Government Network Sites to the DICT-Project Management Office were approved for endorsement.

Meanwhile, DPWH reported the status of the dredging activity along the Cagayan River including the activities and timelines for the remaining sections. According to the report, the Task Force Build Back Better identified

36 priority sections for dredging along the Cagayan River to ease extensive flooding and improve drainage of flood water during the occurrence of typhoons.

On the updates on the submission of LGUs of the Devolution Transition Plans as per DILG Region-2 data, there were 100% submission from the five provinces, four cities, 89 municipalities, and all 2,311 barangays in the region.

RDC2 CHAIR GOV. RODITO PRESIDES 125TH REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

Isabela Governor and Chairman of the Cagayan Regional Development Council 02 presided the 125th RDC-2 Regular Business Meeting held on December 13, 2022 at the Capitol Amphitheater, Alibagu, City of Ilagan, Isabela.

Gov. Rodito said that he is honored to once again lead the RDC-2 as chairman for the next three years (2022-2025), while thanking President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos for his staunch support and trust. He is optimistic that with everyone’s support, RDC-02 will be able to spring up a robust Cagayan Valley.

Gov. Rodito was proud to look back that the crises did not hinder RDC-2 in passing timely measures attuned to the needs of the time.

“Because of your dedication and hard work, we have adopted our Cagayan Valley Regional Recovery Program outlining the framework of finding ways to resume socio-economic activities while sustaining efforts to manage the pandemic, as well as identify appropriate government interventions and policies that facilitate transition into the new phase anchored on

the new normal. We survived the crisis, we overcame the odds, and we are now moving forward faster than we have expected,” Gov. Rodito said.

Gov. Rodito also said that while year 2022 is about to end, RDC 02 still has vital works to accomplish.

“It is imperative that we validate specific strategies, targets, programs, and projects aligned with the priorities of President BBM’s administration,” he said.

The Governor greeted everyone a Merry Christmas. He said that after more than 2 years of pandemic, Christmas would be happier this year as people could now celebrate the holidays in a manner like pre-pandemic Christmas celebrations.

“May our homes radiate God’s blessings of abundance, joy, faith, hope and love,” Gov. Rodito concluded.





Isabela Governor Rodito T. Albano signing the Memorandum of Understanding with Mr. Akinobu Nishida of Japan Water Agency witnessed by Isabela State University President Dr. Ricmar P. Aquino and Kyoto University Professor Tetsuya Sumi for Japan.

Gov. Albano inks MOU with Japan Water Agency on Cagayan River Basin management

Cagayan River Basin Management Council (CBRMC) Chairman and Isabela Governor Rodito T. Albano III signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Japan Water Agency (JWA) through Mr. Akinobu Nishida, Mission Team Leader on behalf of Toshiro Suzuki and JWA Director General for International Affairs, during the Stakeholders Forum on Integrated Flood Risk Management in Cagayan River Basin held at Zen Hotel, Santiago, City, Isabela on July 14-15, 2022.

The signing of the MOU, which aims to establish partnership in conducting collaborative activities and projects on flood and sedimentation management in the Cagayan River Basin and the Magat Dam, was witnessed by Isabela State University President Dr. Ricmar P. Aquino and Professor Tetsuya Sumi of Kyoto University. The ISU and Kyoto University, both members of the Network of Asian River Basin Organizations, are major proponents of this collaborative undertaking.

The JWA and the CBRMC together with its multi-sectoral stakeholders which includes 13 core national government agencies, various state universities and colleges, provincial, city and municipal local government units, private sector representatives, and civil society groups, advocate and adopt the Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) approach in the development and management of river basins and promote knowledge sharing and exchange of information and experience among river

basin organizations throughout Asia.

The Stakeholders' Forum was attended by officials from the JWA, Japan-ASEAN Science, Technology and Innovation Platform (JASTIP), Kyoto University, Asia-Pacific Network (APN) for Global Change Research, and representatives from the 13 core government agencies composing the Cagayan River Basin Management Council.

In his keynote message, Gov. Rodito Albano underscored that the Cagayan River Basin and the province of Isabela will benefit much from the presentation, study and interventions of world-renowned experts from Japan. These would also be a good take-off to revisit, in a collaborative and coordinated manner the Magat Dam Protocols to address loopholes, gaps or missing links.

Nishida expounded the integrated water resource management concepts in river basins, while introducing the role of the Japan Water Agency in the enhancement of people's lives and its impact on economic development. He highlighted the concept of IWRM in response to increasing pressures on water resource

allocations from various users, the recognition of ecosystem requirements, pollution, and the risk of water availability due to climate change.

Meanwhile, Prof. Tetsuya Sumi illustrated various workplans for Japan-Philippines collaboration in the Cagayan River Basin, highlighting several projects for 2020-2025, the challenges on dams in the 21st century, dam asset transfer to the next generation, Japan's dam flood control situation, and pre-release operation practices.

"Japan will proactively contribute to the solution of water-related social issues faced by the Asia-Pacific region by developing 'quality infrastructure' capitalizing on Japan's advanced technologies and public-private partnerships, and fostering digitization and innovation to solve social issues as a growth engine for sustainable development and the formation of a resilient society and economy," he stressed.

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Prof. Tetsuya Sumi of Japan Water Agency



TOWARDS NEW PARTNERSHIP. (L-R) Kyoto University Professor Tetsuya Sumi, Mr. Akinobu Nishida of Japan Water Agency, Cagayan River Basin Management Council Chair and Isabela Governor Rodito T. Albano, Dr. Ricmar P. Aquino of Isabela State University and Santiago City Mayor Sheena Tan-Dy during the Signing of MOU held at Zen Hotel, Santiago City, Isabela on July 14, 2022.



DILG SEC. ABALOS CONFERS 2022 SEAL OF GOOD LOCAL GOVERNANCE TO PROVINCE OF ISABELA

Among the country's 81 provinces, the PROVINCE OF ISABELA is one of 18 provinces which copped the 2022 Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) during the SGLG National Awarding Ceremony held on December 14, 2022 at Fiesta Pavillion, The Manila Hotel.

The award was received by Gov. Rodito T. Albano III from DILG Secretary Benjamin 'Benhur' Abalos, Jr. and Executive Secretary Lucas P. Bersamin.

Three hundred fifty-one local government units (LGUs) across the country were conferred with the most coveted 2022 Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) Award for their exemplary performance amid the COVID-19 health crisis "that responds to the call of times," according to the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

Secretary Abalos expressed his elation as he congratulated the 351 LGUs composed of 18 provinces, 60 cities, and 272 municipalities that passed the stringent SGLG parameters. He said the 351 LGUs are sources of inspiration to other LGUs in pursuing meaningful local autonomy and development.

The Seal of Good Local Governance: Pagkilala sa Katapatan at Kahusayan ng Pamahalaang Lokal symbolizes integrity and good performance of Local Government Units. It is a continuing challenge for provincial, city and municipal governments to do better today and in the years to come in terms of financial administration and sustainability; social protection and sensitivity; health compliance and responsiveness; sustainable education; business-friendliness and

competitiveness; safety, peace and order; environmental management; tourism, heritage development, culture and arts; and youth development.

The SGLG program, evolving from the Seal of Good Housekeeping, was institutionalized under Republic Act No. 11292 or "The Seal of Good Local Governance Act of 2019."

In addition to getting this year's SGLG marker, LGU awardees are also eligible for the SGLG Incentive Fund to finance their local development initiatives in support of national goals and strategic thrusts.

ISABELA copped the most coveted seal four times in a row – 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 – and now its fifth seal for the year 2022.



ISABELA LEADS 2022 EAGLE AWARDS FOR GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

To encourage Local Government Units to participate in the quest for excellence in public service, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) designed an award mechanism to reward exemplary performance and outstanding practices of LGUs and their functionaries called Excellence Award for Governance and Leadership (EAGLE).

With the theme “Pagpupugay sa Pagbangon ng Lokal na Pamahalaan, Katuwang sa Pagbangon at Maunlad na Pamayanan,” this year’s EAGLE Awards was held on November 17, 2022 at Pulsar Hotel Grand Ballroom and Convention Center, Capitol Hills, Caggay, Tuguegarao City.

“Ang karangalang matatanggap ninyo ngayon ay bunga ng inyong pagsusumikap na makagawa ng pagbabago na nararamdaman ng

inyong nasasakupan,” keynote speaker DILG Secretary Benjamin “Benhur” C. Abalos, Jr. stated in his speech delivered by Assistant Secretary for Local Government Odilon L. Pasaraba while urging everyone to check their performance and assess their devotion to a result-based LGU that creates impacts. This is to combat inflation, enhance economic recovery, sustain peace and order and to be ready for a meaningful and result-based devolution.

Leading the 2022 EAGLE Awardees for Region 02 at the Provincial Level is the Provincial Government of Isabela (PGI), a consistent passer of Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG). This year, only two provinces, Isabela and Quirino, passed the 2022 SGLG in Region 02. The cities of Ilagan, Cauayan and Santiago were awarded at the City Level.

At the municipal level, the following received their EAGLE Awards, being

the 2022 SGLG passers – Alicia, Angadanan, Aurora, Benito Soliven, Cabagan, Cordon, Delfin Albano, Divilacan, Echague, Luna, Mallig, Naguillian, Quirino, Roxas, San Mateo and Tumauni.

At the barangay level, 22 barangays in Isabela also received EAGLE Award as SGLG 2022 passers.

LGU-Naguillian nabbed first place with P50,000 project cash award and a marker. For Subaybayani Awards, LGU-Divilacan was second place while LGU-Ramon was third place with P15,000 project cash awards, respectively.

Meanwhile, LGU-San Mariano was finalist for Local Access Road Category.

LGU-Quezon was also a finalist for Potable Water Category and finalist for DRRM Category.

2nd Gawad KALASAG

Special Awards for Excellence in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management and Humanitarian Assistance



Gawad KALASAG (Kalamidad at Sakuna Labanan, Sariling Galing Ang Kaligtasan) Search for Excellence in DRRM and Humanitarian Assistance serves as a recognition and award scheme of the country for various stakeholders who promote and implement DRRM, climate change adaptation and humanitarian programs that protect and shield high-risk communities against extreme hazards and render them more capable of addressing their vulnerabilities.

ISABELA BAGS "FULLY COMPLIANT" AT 22ND NATIONAL GAWAD KALASAG AWARDS

The Province of Isabela received an award for being "Fully Compliant" at the National Gawad KALASAG Seal for Excellence in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management and Humanitarian Assistance.

On behalf of Gov. Rodito T. Albano III, PDRRMO Atty. Constante Foronda Jr. received the award during the 22nd Gawad Kalasag national awarding ceremony held at The Manila Hotel on December 7, 2022.

Fully compliant Local Government Units (LGUs) are those that generally adhere to the standards for the establishment and functionality of the DRRMOs. NDRRMC said that there are 135 Beyond Compliant and 436 Fully Compliant LGU-awardees this year.

"Isabela was not supposed to join the Gawad

Kalasag search this year. As many may know, we were the recipient of the prestigious award for three consecutive years before and that elevated us to the Gawad Kalasag Hall of Fame. That rare feat required a lot of preparation. Since then, we have avoided joining to give other PDRRM Councils a chance to the notable recognition," PDRRMO Foronda admitted.

The ultimate goal in Isabela is to serve the people. The opportunity to serve and raising the bar in the culture of preparedness and resiliency is a reward in itself, far more important than all the awards and accolades combined.

In 2019, PDRRMC-Isabela solidified its status as the country's DRRM champion after winning Best PDRRMC in the Philippines at the 19th Gawad Kalasag Award, a third consecutive win, thus paving the way for its induction into the elite Hall

of Fame. The Hall of Fame is a mechanism aimed at elevating an individual or institution to a league of its own after showing consistency and diligence in demonstrating excellence in a competition.

One thing is certain. Isabela does not rest on its laurels. There's no stopping Isabela from proving beyond doubt that it is indeed the most awarded province in the Philippines.

"When we vied for the most recent Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG), entering the Gawad Kalasag search was a requirement. We therefore submitted the requirements. It was almost a surprise when we learned that we qualified in the regional level, and then later, the national level. This goes to show that if evaluated on any regular day, the Isabela PDRRMC will always be of Gawad Kalasag caliber," Foronda concluded.

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY CONFERS 2022 MAYOR'S AWARD TO PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF ISABELA

The City Government of Puerto Princesa, Palawan, headed by City Mayor Lucilo Bayron, awarded the Provincial Government of Isabela with the 2022 MAYOR'S AWARD during the culminating events of Puerto Princesa City's 150th Founding Anniversary held at Puerto Princesa Garden Island Resort on March 3, 2022.

On behalf of Gov. Rodito Albano III, the award was received by Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Officer Jimmy Rivera.

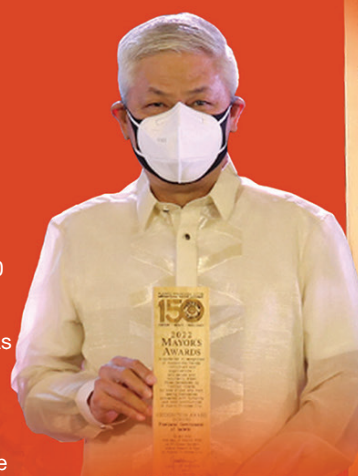
The Provincial Government of Isabela dispatched two teams of "Project: Isabela loves Visayas and Mindanao" on what is dubbed as their "longest mission" to date, a 28-day humanitarian and relief missions from January 27 to February 15, 2022 to communities affected by Typhoon Odette in Visayas and Mindanao.

The first team composed of 39 personnel from PDRRMO, PSWDO, OPE and PNP, in a fleet of two Solar Water Purifiers, two trucks, two

pick-ups, eight Isuzu dump trucks loaded with premium quality Isabela Rice to Southern Leyte and Surigao. The second team was composed of 42 personnel from PDRRMO, PSWDO, PGSO and PNP in a fleet of two Solar Water Purifiers, three dump trucks, three Toyota Hilux, six BRO wheeler trucks loaded with Isabela Rice to Regions 6 and 7.

A total of 20,000 packs at two kgs. per pack of Isabela rice were distributed to Region 6; 30,000 packs to Region 7; 15,000 packs to Leyte; 18,750 packs to Surigao and 10,000 packs for Puerto Princesa City, Palawan. A voluntary contribution of P30,000 from PDRRMO Isabela Employees was also deposited to DBP-Ilagan City Branch and sent to OCD-Manila intended for various LGUs affected by Typhoon Odette.

The Isabela Rescue Team was awarded with the prestigious Bakas Parangal ng Kadakilaan by the NDRRMC in 2012 for its Project: Rescuers Without Borders, guided with the philosophy "Public service knows no boundaries."



The 2022 "Heroism" Mayor's Awards were conferred in recognition of modern-day heroes – individuals and organizations – who served and voluntarily aided those devastated by Typhoon Odette, for love of God and man, seeing themselves connected with humanity and local communities of Puerto Princesa City.



BLGF awards Isabela with Best Local Fiscal Management Practices during COVID-19 Pandemic



THE BANNER PHOTO WAS THE CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION OF THE PROVINCE OF ISABELA RECEIVED DURING THE 2021 BLGF STAKEHOLDERS RECOGNITION PROGRAM FOR DEMONSTRATING THE BEST LOCAL FISCAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

The COVID-19 pandemic did not stop the Province of Isabela from reaping award at the national level. The Bureau of Local Government Finance (BLGF) awarded the province for demonstrating the Best Local Fiscal Management Practices during the COVID-19 pandemic at the 2021 BLGF Stakeholders Recognition Program on December 14, 2021 held at Clark Freeport Zone, Mabalacat City, Pampanga.

The awardees were selected based on the reports submitted and consequently validated by the BLGF Regional Office. In the last phase of the three-part event, the Province of Isabela featured their best practices in the area of Efficient Allocation of Funds and Resources. An 18-minute video

was presented as a proof of the efficient utilization of funds for various programs, projects and activities (PPAs) to boost the capacity of the Province of Isabela in responding to the COVID-19 health crisis.

This includes the provision of assistance of the provincial government through the strategic innovations of Gov. Rodito Albano III and Vice Gov. Faustino “Bojie” Dy III to the affected households and marginalized sectors, protecting the healthcare workers and the public from COVID-19, and the continuous delivery of basic education amidst the pandemic.

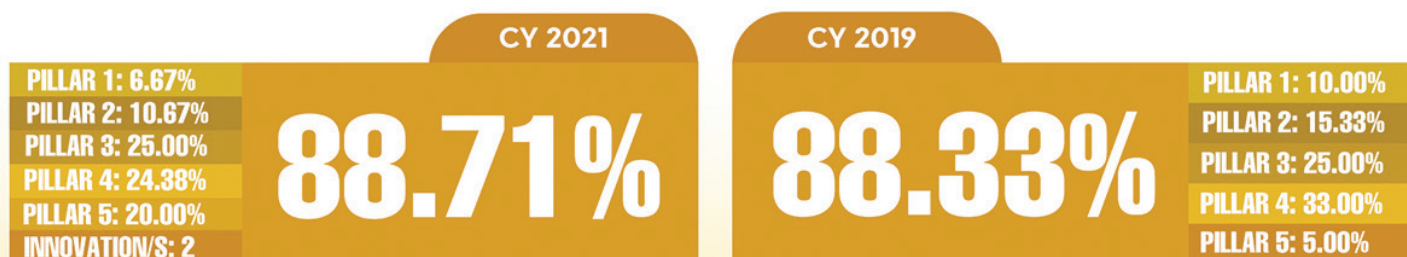
The Province of Isabela hopes that this recognition continues to motivate the

province and other LGUs to implement best local fiscal management that will further improve the LGU operations and provide better services to the people.

The recognition highlighted the commitment to support and incentivize best practices of LGUs in transitioning to the new normal.

“LGUs sharing best practices on efficient allocation of funds and resources have set the green light that we are in a secured footing in putting primacy to the health and well-being of constituents, at the same time expending for urgent demands for infrastructure and other development programs,” said BLGF Deputy Executive Director Atty. Flosie Tayag.

Congratulations! PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF ISABELA



For garnering an overall 88.33% rating for calendar year 2019 and 88.71% for 2021 in the Peace and Order Council Performance Audit conducted by DILG Regional Audit Team consonant to the DILG Memorandum Circular directing municipal, city and provincial peace and order councils to undergo periodic performance audits.

The Isabela PPOC vowed to continue focusing on more programs to promote peace and order including public safety, anti-insurgency and anti-criminality in the province.

ONE MILLION BAMBOOS IN ONE DAY:

Isabela's Antidote to Soil Erosion and Flooding

The Provincial Government of Isabela revived its legacy tree planting project on December 20, 2022, aiming to rehabilitate and restore the Cagayan River Riparian Zones with bamboos.

From Roxas to Sta. Maria, from San Mariano to San Pablo, the provincial government has sought to engage and foster the participation of Isabeleños in the historic One Million Bamboos in One Day Project.

Time and again, we have seen every sector in the province coming together, from barangay residents to government employees, volunteering their time and resources to participate in the province's massive reforestation efforts.



The bamboos, with their thick and wide-spreading root structure, can help to hold loose soil in place. It is well-rooted and resistant to landslides. It was discovered that the roots of a bamboo tree may extend by 25 percent to contain six cubic meters of soil. This can prevent erosion, particularly large-scale sheet erosion, which can result in fatalities and property damage.

Floods and landslides wreaked havoc in Isabela last November 13, 2020 due to the rains brought by Typhoon Ulysses (Vamco) and previous tropical cyclones and depressions. For decades, Isabeleños seemed battle-tested in terms of coping with disasters as there were no signs of agony on their faces in the aftermath of typhoons or landslides. But in Isabela, resiliency is not romanticized.

Isabeleños in the historic tree-planting event. Governor Rodito Albano III and Vice Governor Faustino “Bojie” Dy III were not content to stand on the sidelines. They forged partnerships to help the province overcome the threat of disasters.

According to Provincial Administrator Atty. Noel Manuel Lopez, the project shall continue to serve as the catalyst for aggressive multi-stakeholder volunteerism in the province following the success of the same project that was launched on December 20, 2019 with 1.2 million trees planted, exceeding the one million target.

ON FLOODING AND SOIL EROSION

Massive floods have regularly torn through the riversides in Isabela, destroying farms and houses. The people hope they will soon no longer worry when the rain hammers down the Cagayan River with the bamboo trees they had planted along the riverbanks. When grown, the bamboos will act like a wall, slowing water pouring from the swollen river. Its roots also stabilize the soil and catch silt, helping keep the riverbanks from collapsing. The roots of giant bamboo (*Dendrocalamus asper*) that Isabeleños planted can efficiently absorb excess water and bind the soil together, thus reducing erosion.

A project funded by the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST-PCAARRD) and conducted by a team of researchers from Central Mindanao University (CMU) proved that giant bamboo could indeed reduce soil loss, decrease water discharge, and reduce sediment yield. These variables may aid in preventing soil erosion and landslides. Bamboo foliage also helps intercept raindrops and minimize the

In an “ambitious attempt” to mitigate flooding in communities submerged during the onslaught of past typhoons, the Provincial Government of Isabela once again embarked on another milestone of bringing together the Isabeleños through the One Million Bamboos in One Day Project on December 20, 2022.

The provincial government, youth, barangay residents, institutions, schools, and other sectors from private and public entities planted over one million bamboo trees along the banks of the Cagayan River and its tributaries to rehabilitate and restore the Cagayan River Riparian Zones.

The provincial government had sought to engage and foster the participation of



soil surface's impact. Bamboo litter also shields the soil from raindrops' impact, as decomposed litter improves soil structure and promotes water entry by 40%. This further reduces surface flow, translating to minimized soil erosion and landslides.

It is indeed crystal clear that the bamboos planted along river banks are scientifically fast-growing and effective barriers that will pave the way for the restoration of the Cagayan River Riparian Zone.

The provincial government is doing everything in its power to combat the threat of climate change and to protect Isabela's resources, people, and the province itself from risks. In every effort the provincial government has undertaken, Isabeleños always show solidarity founded on their faith in each other. Someday, Isabeleños will be able to realize their vision of a more resilient Isabela where people choose to work hand in hand towards a brighter and safer future.





PGI'S TIENDA ISABELA NOW OPEN

Tienda Isabela, the consumer enterprise of the Isabela Provincial Employees Association (IPEA), was launched on October 4, 2022 to jump-start the celebration of the National Cooperative Month led by the Provincial Cooperative Livelihood and Entrepreneurial Development Office (PCLEDO).

The store is also a collaboration between various cooperatives in the province where their local products, such as vinegars, handicrafts, bagoong, gourmet tuyo, banana chips, cornicks, calamansi juice drink, crispy mushroom chicharon and peanut products, were displayed and made available to consumers.

"Ito nga po ang first pet project ng IPEA – itong employees' commissary – kung saan yung mga bilihin sa murang halaga ay malaking tulong sa mga empleyado ng kapitolyo pati na rin sa mga kooperatibang nais makipag-product collaboration," PCLED Officer Mr. Ric-Justice E. Angobung said during his welcome message to the attendees.

Angobung also said that through the Tienda, the PGI employees, as well as the general public, will now have the opportunity to buy basic needs and prime commodities and local coop products lower than the prevailing market prices.

"We are very optimistic that the future of the cooperative is very bright, the last three weeks is an indication that there is no other way but up. Nakatutuwa at

nakatataba ng puso na makita ang mabilis na pag-usbong ng ating kooperatiba," IPEA Board of Director Atty. Jenny Flor Manantan-Cabaddu said as she expresses her gratitude to the board for their dedication, commitment, and efforts.

"With the initiative of our coop Chairman, Atty. Lopez, we were able to infuse funds and contributions from the honorable governor, the honorable vice governor, and our members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan," she added.

DOLE, CSC CONFER CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION TO IPEA

Meanwhile, the Isabela Provincial Employees' Association (IPEA) has already been registered with the Department of Labor and Employment and Civil Service Commission pursuant to Executive Order No. 180 as evidenced by Certificate of Registration No. 2550 issued on 06 December 2022.

The Certificate of Accreditation is documentary proof that the employees' organization in the agency has the majority support of all the rank-and-file employees in the negotiating unit. Hence, it can enter into collective negotiations with the provincial government.

IPEMPC Board of Director Atty. Jenny Flor Manantan-Cabaddu said as she expresses her gratitude to the board for their dedication, commitment, and efforts

"Nakatutuwa at nakatataba ng puso na makita ang mabilis na pag-usbong ng ating kooperatiba, with the initiative of our Chairman Atty. Lopez, we were able to infuse funds and contributions from the honorable governor, the honorable vice governor, and our members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan."

PGI SETS STAGE FOR BAMBANTI 2023; DY APPOINTED AS DIRECTOR-GENERAL

After a two-year pause in the celebration of the Bambanti Festival due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Provincial Government of Isabela (PGI) will resume all events of the festival set on the last week of January 2023 with the theme "ISABELA: Pagharap sa Bagong Hamon ng Kinabukasan."

Aside from the LGU-contested events – Bambanti Booth, Bambanti Scarecrow, Street Dance, Dance Showdown, Festival King and Queen, Makan ken Mainum and the Search for Queen Isabela 2023 – other activities include the Job Fair, 3K Color Fun Run and Rave Party, Zumba, 25K Fun Bike, Shoot Fest, Golf Activity and Musical Fest.

Gov. Rodito Albano III designated Vice Gov. Faustino "Bojie" Dy III as Director-General of the 2023 Bambanti Festival pursuant to Executive Order No. 38 signed on Nov. 15, 2022. As Director-General, Vice Gov. Dy presided the first Executive Committee Meeting of the 2023 Bambanti Festival Organizing Committee on November 22, 2022 at Balai, Capitol Compound, Alibagu, City of Ilagan, Isabela.

On December 15, 2022, the festival committee discussed the first draft of the General Reference Management and the accommodations of contingents. The general reference was finalized on January 10, 2023 during the 3rd Executive Committee Meeting.

BAMBANTI FESTIVAL 2023 ACTIVITIES

QUEEN ISABELA 2023

Queen Isabela 2023 is the highly anticipated extravaganza of the 2023 Bambanti Festival, featuring the artistic creations of the various local designers. Thirty gorgeous candidates from different municipalities will battle for one crown.

Sectoral Representative for Women, Hon. Lourdes Panganiban, the assistant director of the competition, underscored on November 22, 2022 that the totality of a candidate as a woman matters most.

"It's not only the physical beauty that counts, but your totality as a woman. Hindi pa nagsisimula ang kompetisyon pero siguradong panalo na kayong lahat because we are seeing now empowered women of Isabela. Your willingness to represent your town really means that you believe in yourselves. Ako bilang sectoral representative ng kababaihan, makakaasa kayo na gagawin nating maayos ang Queen Isabela," she said.

STREET DANCE COMPETITION & DANCE SHOWDOWN

Street Dance Competition and Dance Showdown will also make comeback at the Bambanti Festival 2023. In 2019, the Provincial Government of Isabela was recognized by the Guinness World of Records for organizing the largest gathering of people dressed as scarecrows.

FESTIVAL KING AND QUEEN

The Festival King and Queen of every city and municipality will lead their contingent during the Street Dance and Dance Showdown with their colorful, glittering, and fabulous Bambanti attires. The kings and queens will be judged based on their

ability to lead in the execution, performance, and staging of their groups.

AGRI-ECOTOURISM BOOTH AND GIANT BAMBANTI INSTALLATION

The agricultural produce, trade and industry products, tourist attractions and investment opportunities of different cities and municipalities were highlighted at the Agri-Ecotourism Booth of the festival.

The booths were made out of raw, environment-friendly and biodegradable materials.

The giant scarecrows, the prescribed elements of Agri-Ecotourism Exhibit, were also displayed in front of the booths. They highlighted every town's hope for a brighter future.

MAKAN KEN MAINUM

Makan Ken Mainum will be a major activity at the Agri-Ecotourism Booth and Bambanti Village.

It is a cooking and alcoholic beverage preparation competition to encourage the Isabeleños to discover new dishes and beverages that will be introduced in the local restaurants, hotels, and resorts in Cagayan Valley.

COLOR FUN RUN, ZUMBA & RAVE PARTY

The provincial government strives to empower the Isabeleño youth by conducting worthwhile recreational activities. In 2022, the iRUN for TAAL had 13,270 registered participants. To put on another successful event, the provincial government made great strides and double its efforts in pursuing 2023 Bambanti's TAKBO PARA SA E-LIB NI BRO.

This fun run for a cause will support the forthcoming digital library of Isabela which aims to solve the traditional book deterioration problem in the province and, at the same time, cultivate the Isabeleño youth's passion for reading.

SHOOT FEST, GOLF ACTIVITY, AND 25K FUN BIKE

Shoot Fest and Golf are the brand new activities of the Bambanti Festival.

Holding a firearm, let alone firing it or competing with it, will be an exhilarating experience for the participants. Added to this is the inclusion of a Golf Activity to provide participants with another sports event.

The 25K Fun Bike will be another sports highlight at Bambanti Festival 2023 to promote the health benefits and fun of cycling in the province. Every cyclist who will complete the 25-km route will be given a finisher medal including special prizes.

GRAND FIREWORKS DISPLAY

To conclude the weeklong grandest festival in the province, a spectacular Grand Fireworks Display will be enjoyed by the public.

The Bambanti, scarecrow in English, has been a symbol of Isabeleños resilience and industry as these are placed as standing protectors in the fields to drive away pests and birds bugging the crops.

The creative concept of Bambanti Festival 2023 implants a beautiful message of hope and dreams to the resilient Isabeleños who ardently love their land of birth.



WE MADE IT!



The **PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF ISABELA**
and **ALL ITS DEPARTMENTS** and **OFFICES**
successfully passed the
AUDIT FOR CERTIFICATION to

**ISO 9001:2015 QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**



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